

Last week I was proud to support the Federal Employee Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009 ([H.R. 626](#)

). This legislation will make the Federal Government a more family friendly, competitive employer. This legislation is headed to the Senate for their consideration.

As the country's largest single employer, the federal government is responsible for over 2.7 million jobs. The federal government is facing the retirement of 40% of its workforce over the next ten years and must be able to compete with private sector opportunities in order to attract talented new employees. Under current law, federal employees who want paid time off for the birth or adoption of a child only have the option of using their accrued sick days and vacation time to supplement unpaid leave. It is difficult for relatively new employees or those who experience reoccurring health problems to save up enough time for paid parental leave. Even for older employees who rarely get sick, unpredictable life events can make it equally difficult to accrue sufficient parental leave time. Parents should not be forced to choose between their new child and their paycheck.

The Congress' Joint Economic Committee has found that Fortune 100 firms offer paid leave that typically lasts six to eight weeks. This is also consistent with the amount of leave typically offered by Congressional offices. The lack of a Paid Parental Leave policy for newly born or adopted children puts the Federal Government in the minority, not only in relation to U.S. companies but also amongst developed nations. The European Union requires that member countries offer 14 weeks of paid maternity leave and most offer more than the required amount, and the U.S. is one of only five countries out of 165 surveyed that does not guarantee paid parental leave.

The Federal Employee Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009 will cost relatively little compared to the

benefit to American families and workers that it would bring. It is past time for federal employees to enjoy the benefits offered to employees of private companies and fix a flaw in our current system.